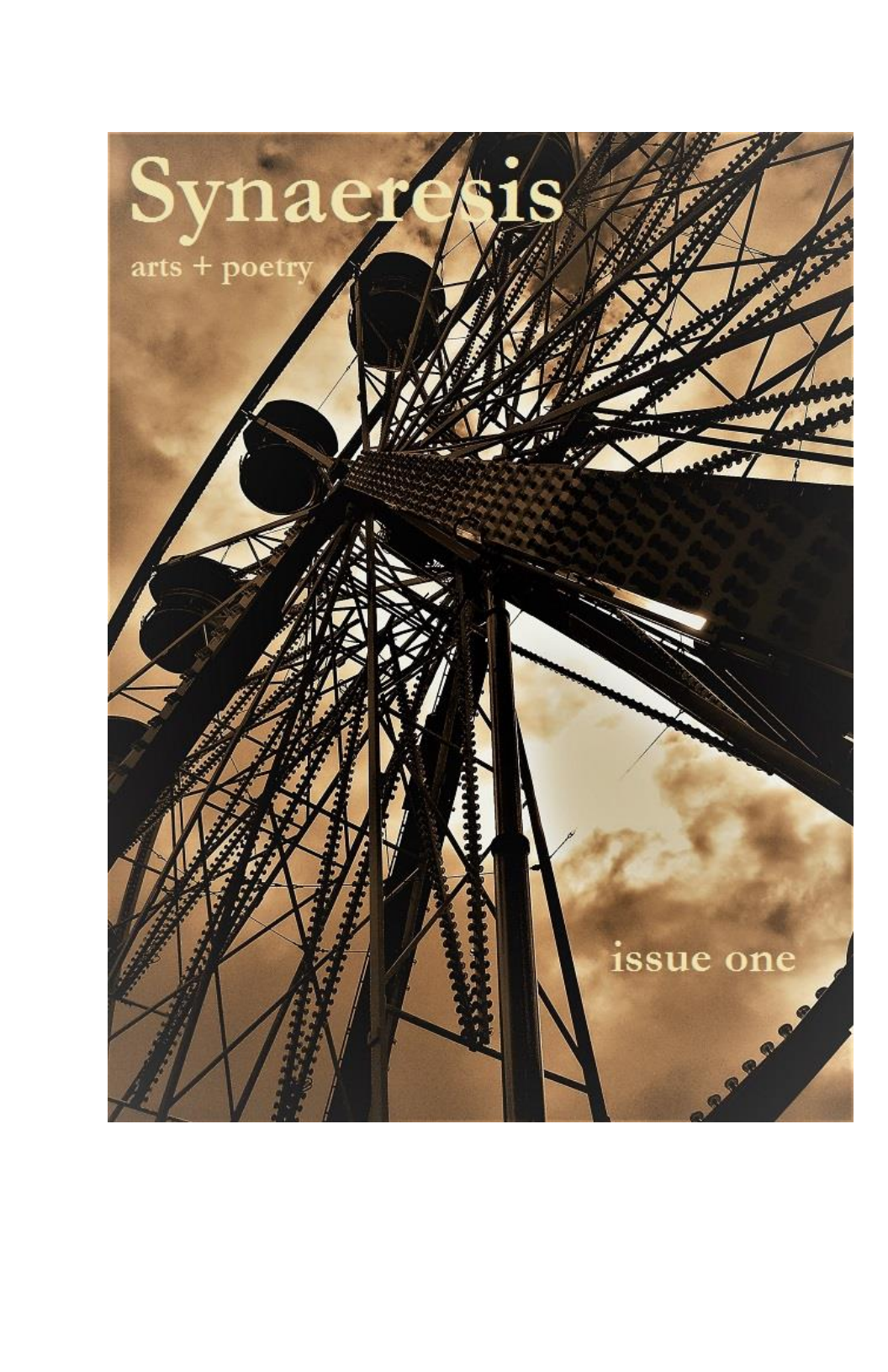




Synaeresis

arts + poetry

issue one

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Vol. 1 No. 1

Harmonia Press

LONDON

Synaeresis : arts + poetry Vol. 1 No. 1

ISSN 2371-6940

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Published by Harmonia Press, London, Ontario

Email: harmoniapress@hotmail.com

Website: harmoniapress.blogspot.ca

synaeresismagazine.blogspot.ca

Editor: Andreas Gripp

Front cover photo: Ferris Wheel, Ilderton Fair 2016
(Andreas Gripp)

Back cover photo: Toronto Skyline 2016
(Andreas Gripp)

Text font is Calibri 12pt.

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Synaeresis

arts + poetry

Issue Two

Call for Submissions!

poetry (1 to 3 poems)

flash fiction (1 to 2 stories)

photography (1 to 6 photos)

artwork (1 to 6 pieces)

Please email your submission as a separate attachment (MS Word / PDF / JPG). Please include a brief bio of yourself as well in case your work is selected for publication. **Email address:** harmoniapress@hotmail.com

The deadline for second issue consideration is presently April 15, 2017, but please be advised that this can change slightly so it's best to send in your work sooner rather than later. Only new and previously unpublished offerings, please.

Synaeresis is an **online journal** showcasing local, regional, Canadian, American and International talent. No payment is available at the present time to artists but there are **no** submission/reading fees as well. That said, the editorial selection process is rather particular, so please send only the best of your best. Thanks!

Rollo Nye

translucent seasonal disorder

sleeping in the past

Hey, mister, I paid dearly for this dream!

translucent seasonal disorder

is what somebody said it was.

something stiff could counter its effects

somebody said.

Maybe tomorrow will be?

this bus has wheels which turn in different directions

I've tried to count them to infinity

beginning with zero.

this explains the stall.

When I get off you will know

by the trail of laughter.

it won't be cold

where I'm heading

somebody said.

awake I wonder,

Can it be nothing at all?

Rollo Nye is a poet who lives in New York. His poems have appeared in various publications including *The Red River Review* and *Panoplyzine*, and is forthcoming in *Three Drops From a Cauldron* and *Hobo Camp Review*.

Howie Good

Apocalypse Wow

You must change your life. At least that's the advice I got. My life has been a migration. You go into these areas where you don't know what you can do. A third jump in, a third resist but soon give up, a third try to hide. On Berlin Street, a vehicle hit a deer. Someone was verbally harassing children on Barre Street. And no cops for miles. People were using drugs at Hubbard Park. Now they see sky, and they remember the sound of a waterfall in a hurricane. On State Street, a missing dog was spotted. I didn't believe my friends when they first told me. To hell with it. Look at the sunny side, even if your house is burning.

Quibbles

Everything flows. Velocity is advancing everywhere. Do you want to die on the hill? Do you think this is going away? They don't want to turn off the information, ever. You can see everywhere the end of resistance, the dust of this planet, the marvelous clouds.

*

Do cows get excited? Their knees don't look like they can handle all the jumping. People also ask: Do ants eat each other? Do ants make sounds? I'm not usually this angry, the way underpants really are. There are 55 different types of ants, many no better than cannibals. And still we keep holding onto our spoons.

*

A child was almost hit in a crosswalk by Trigger the Wonder Horse. I peep demons. We have never been modern. I have conversations about how forests think. It's why I'm worried. Robots have been screwing our women – yes, something possible everywhere. The last shudder of the hips has the shape of water. And then the music takes over. It once employed a whole town. Debra wants to hear oldies. But it isn't like that. Some of the audience are in tears.

What the Sex Robots Will Teach Us

Written in collaboration with Dale Wisely

This is the country of the future. There's a stem here, the oldest part of which dies off while simultaneously rejuvenating itself at the tip. But is that necessarily a problem? Not for those who wish to gain practice with leaks, throaty gurgling sounds, and orgasms – and all of it before actually having sex.

*

If anyone asks, "What happened to your ear?" just say, "Steely Dan on the headphones." Things pass by in the night, three jars with roots and a heart. One eye is enough. The police extract DNA from a shoe. Robots tirelessly pursue your women with only one thing on their minds. And they will bring back smallpox, a new variety featuring energy-efficient LED lighting and scars that read like schematics.

*

There's sex and there are robots, so there will be sex robots and robot sex. Just last night the body of a woman was hauled out of the water, the contribution of human warmth to climate change. Is it too late now for Dr. Heimlich to apply the Heimlich maneuver? The fish are yellow and blue like the floating spots you see after a camera flash, and flowers have grown claws to scabble over the rubble.

Howie Good is the author of *Dangerous Acts Starring Unstable Elements*, winner of the 2015 Press Americana Prize. His latest books are *A Ghost Sings, a Door Opens* from Another New Calligraphy and *Robots vs. Kung Fu* from AngelHouse Press.

Dale Wisely is the founding editor of the cult favorite *Right Hand Pointing*.

Lana Bella

DEAR SUKI: NUMBER FIFTY-SIX

Dear Suki: Rotterdam, July, '87,
you are the one with a flask full
of solitude and traveler's high in
flannel and wool, fingers fretted
in flight, riding the air of tremors
and electric music. But in these
predawn hours, I am the leaving
lumbered back by a single glance,
a parka hooded up where all hints
of dew stole into the sad stroke of
your reaper's snare. Too slow for
haste, too sudden for apathy, and
always just ordinary enough where
I am neither more nor less, slender
and spare for the brevity of things
that hurled me on the hollow brass
of kerosene lamp by the foyer, each
particle of light gleaming over is a
shadow knowing not which way to bow.

A three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, **Lana Bella** is an author of two chapbooks, *Under My Dark* (Crisis Chronicles Press, 2016) and *Adagio* (Finishing Line Press, forthcoming), and has had poetry and fiction featured in over 300 journals including *California Quarterly*, *Chiron Review*, *Columbia Journal*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, and *Tipton Poetry Journal*.

Lana resides in California as well as the coastal town of Nha Trang, Vietnam, where she is a mom of two far-too-clever frolicsome imps.

Carrie Connel-Gripp

Game of Life

She looked at her daughter sitting at the kitchen table, a cup of coffee in front of her. Filling her own cup, she sat down across from the younger woman. She tried to keep silent but blurted out: "Have you ever played the game of Life?"

"Aren't we playing it now?" came the reply.

"Yes, I suppose we are. What I meant was that every day I go through all the steps, even if I don't want to, of getting ready for the day, like you have to do to get through the game."

"Hmm," said her daughter. "Are you bothered by my not showering today?"

"Well, no, just that ..."

"Look, Mom, if it was a normal day, and I was at home, then I would have gotten up, showered and followed all the steps I do every day. Today is not a normal day, because I'm here. So I got up, got dressed, washed my face, put on make-up, brushed my hair and teeth. I skipped the shower, but completed all the other steps so that I could be ready in time – in time to go to the church to commemorate someone else's final step in the game."

"You're right, of course."

Mother and daughter sat, drinking coffee, one thinking of others who had finished the game and one thinking of who will be next.

Carrie Connel-Gripp lives in London, Ontario, with her husband and two demanding cats. Her work has been published in *The Toronto Quarterly*, *Another London*, *Canadian Stories*, *phati'tude Literary Magazine*, *Writtle Magazine*, and in two books of poetry, *A Day in Pieces* (2013) and *Persona Grata* (2016), both released by Harmonia Press.

Donna Allard

hotaru

branches leafless
resemble driftwood
tomorrow they will be on fire
under the midday sun hourglass of universality

but right now under starlight
i break each like matchsticks
and they spark

**hotaru: the Japanese word for "fireflies"*

Donna Allard lives in New Brunswick and is the founder of *Sojourner Literary Festival* and author of four books of poetry including *From Shore to Shoormal* (Brokenjaw Press, 2013).

Jenne Kaivo

Owl

The owl is a creature that flies without sound
but sits on a bough, and it howls. The ghost
in the graveyard's a moaning white owl,
haunting the meadow for mice. The mouse
has been killed by a shrew. The shrew
is untamable, hectic and small, with a mouth
full of poison and pelt
that would not dress a doll.

The doll must go naked, and missing
a leg, which was stolen
since children are pure. The child
whacks the doll on the headboard,
then flings her aside, and pounds off
to hoot at the owl.

Lunatic Mood

The moon howls to you
into your dreams.
I hear it in your dying-rabbit screams.

The moon is pure tonight, so pure
strewing all over us its stolen light.
In the black-dust dunes and the empty seas
that old flag waves just right.

Down here a tide is surging strong.
In our darkened rooms we drown in dreams.
The spray erodes the stone that hides our inner minds.

Bloody red and rarely blue,
that old moon on our horizon stares,
observes nightmares and sleeping-rabbit dreams.
Paints us so bright with silver light
we know this is a stolen night.

What do you see on the searing moon?

A little hare with silvered fur.

A fisherman feeling for distant stars.

A woman lost.

A face with a leering gaze.

A seal with huge dark eyes that writhes and swims away.

The moon is pure tonight, so pure

strewing all over us its stolen light.

In the black-dust dunes and the empty seas

that old flag waves just right.

The moon howls to you

into your dreams

I hear it in your dying-rabbit screams.

Jenne Kaivo is a perpetual student in Northern California, where she works at a hoodoo shop. Her work has previously appeared in *The Lovecraft*, *The Steelhead Special*, and *The Lion's Roar*. She has a lot of dinosaurs. That's important.

Kenneth Salzmann

Ink Stains

for Maggie Estep, dead at 50

"Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!"
— Herman Melville, *Billy Budd: A Sailor*

Consider Maggie's unfinished novel one more book
I won't read in a too-short lifetime spent
not reading too many essential books.

There would have been a pit bull,
I know, and tough, strong, vulnerable,
steely women wrapped
in layers of language
and gathered into a gang.

I think of days spent in literature classes
with Melville's abbreviated masterwork,
unresolved meanings fluttering slightly
out of reach like brittle manuscript
pages locked away for years.

I think of budding certainties
obscured by words. Smudges
across time. Finely crafted
characters turned inside out

in certain strokes when
stuttering angels must hang.

I think of the way ink stains.

Consider Maggie's just one more
novel among many ended abruptly
in a truncated final chapter.

There will be a pit bull, I'm sure,
and unrealized meanings
fluttering out of reach.
There will be vicious vulnerable
women turning to dust like old paper.

I consider how often I might reach
for her never-to-be book,
only to be reminded yet again
of the way ink stains.

Kenneth Salzmann's poetry has appeared in *Child of My Child: Poems and Stories for Grandparents, Beloved on the Earth: 150 Poems of Grief and Gratitude* and *Riverine: An Anthology of Hudson Valley Writers*. He lives in Woodstock, New York, and Ajijic, Mexico, with his wife, editor Sandi Gelles-Cole.

Kevin Heslop

Screen

This morning I am listening
to Robert Hass's reading in Waterloo
Village, New Jersey on a Saturday night
in September eight years ago, tweezing
loose hairs from the arms of the keys
of my sterling typewriter which, itself,
is an American product of enduring manufacture.
It was born, so to speak, like Hass, in 1941,
a time when Smith-Corona was just beginning
to assemble the M1903A3 Springfield rifles
of which they would produce a quarter million
during the second world war.
"Though the US military doesn't count—,"
Hass is reciting, "Why put a weapon in the hands
of your enemies? — By conservative reckoning,
9500 Iraqi civilians
were killed during the invasion of Iraq.
By conservative reckoning, 300 000 Iraqi civilians
have been killed during the occupation of Iraq."
A bright green key helicopters down
from the complexly-shadowed maple overhead and lands
upright between the typewriter's "Tab" and "Margin
Release" keys. "Two and a half million Iraqis
have been driven from their homes and are living in exile.

Two million Iraqis, having been driven from their homes
by ethnic cleansing, are living in internal exile.
Last night, on television, a candidate for the presidency
of this country described the state of affairs as ‘winning’.”
In the singsong voice and syntactical imprecision
it gives me pleasure to affect when speaking
to my five-year-old yellow lab, I tell him, as he struggles
with having too-quickly swallowed six red waterflakes
I scooped out of a halved watermelon on the black granite
countertop in the kitchen as water was boiling
on the stove for tea, I tell him: “Hang on, puppy:
I’ll get you some cold water because what else is there?”
and do so. Coming outside with the broad clear bowl
of water slopping from lip to lip,
I remember I’ve been astounded by the number
of houseflies whom each morning and every afternoon
appear about the screen door to the backyard’s porch
and overgrowth of green life with plaintive little
supplications. Part of me thinks that, if they could,
they would be praying;
another part suspects that they *are* praying —
there are no atheistic houseflies
holed up inside in springtime —

each one about the length of your thumbnail
and half that nail's width, like little typewriters with wings
bumbling against the still-unfamiliar net
of which their consciousness assures them,
again and again.

"Walt Whitman," Hass is asking, "where are you?"
and the applause that follows is six-year-old applause.

I reach back to open the screen door;
most of the flies get caught between the screen
and its now-adjacent pane of glass, so I slide the door
back and forth on its dry track, back and forth,
until the last fly tumbles into the freedom
it has been permitted.

"Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Emma Goldman, Rosa Parks,"
recites Hass, "Henry David Thoreau. Where are you?"

I turn back to tweeze the last few hairs, the breeze
making wriggling little longings of them
under the concave dishes upon which
the letters of the Roman alphabet lie in ready repose;
and already two more flies are caught behind the screen.
Where do they keep coming from, I wonder.
They won't say, "No."

Kevin Heslop is a poet from London, Ontario. His work has appeared in *NOON: journal of the short poem*, *Forget Magazine*, *The Finger*, *Occasus Literary Journal*, *Translating Horses* (Baseline Press), and *Another London* (Harmonia Press). He won Poetry London's Poetry Contest and the Occasus Poetry Prize in 2015. He studies English literature at Western University and interviews local writers for London Open Mic Poetry Night. He recently appeared onstage in Theatre Western's *12 Angry Men*.

Brian Baker

Bridget asking Joan of Arc

BRIDGET DONNELLY
BORN
MAY 1, 1858
MURDERED
FEB. 4, 1880
A NATIVE OF TIPPERARY
IRELAND

is this fire?
is this really fire
or
just so cold
this winter death
that I cannot tell
what men have brought to me
this night, I
need your expertise, you
speak with saints
and angels and
who knows more of fire
than you?

does it smell this way,
like woman's hair
and a young man's body,
melting into nightclothes?
please, the archangel
does not come to me,
we never speak of holy causes
and God's will

please,
before my head and
body separate

is this fire?

In the summer, how we got there

There are engines running somewhere
you never think about,
that break down and are fixed,
that drip oil onto the steel floor, oil
which flows to bolts and
surrounds them, like blood
in the joints or hollow spaces
of your own body.

That the captain never notices
as the engines reverse themselves
and the ship gently nudges
into the cradle of dock
instead of
full throttle ahead,
through the waiting lines
of cars and passengers,
ripping up the numbered, lettered
laneways,
coming to rest among the
laughing coastal pines
and the boxes they make someday
or this paper.

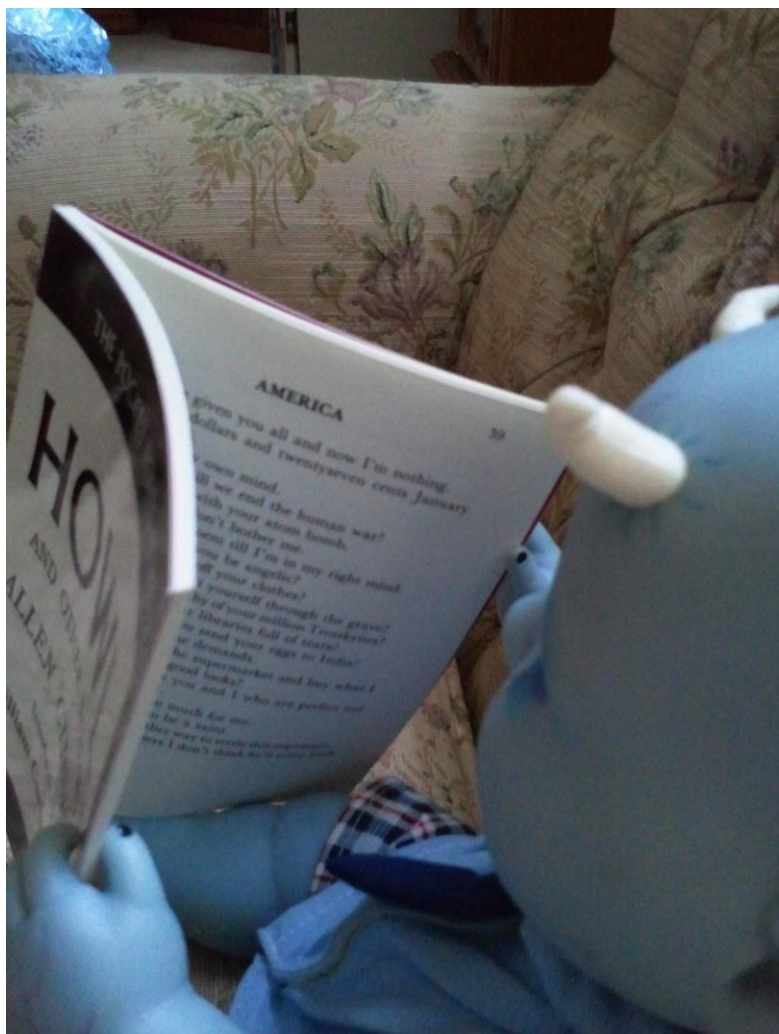
How I Spent My Summer Vacation,
going there again, not knowing about
engines or the times they might be
treacherous, take you somewhere
other than the ferry landing or the
slippery-when-wet bridge or
shiner heaven, in the garden.
Even the wooden gate you swing on
has a mechanism you never think of,
that allows it to be
and you to be on it, moving,
under roses.

Brian Baker has lived in London, Ontario for the last 52 years. He started writing poetry in 1987 and has been published in the *Windsor Review*, *Dandelion*, *The Lyric* and *The Antigonish Review*. He won the 1990 *Forest City Poetry Contest*.

Junior Howling – Andreas Gripp



Junior in America – Andreas Gripp



In Stereophonic Sound – Andreas Gripp



Tea Time – Andreas Gripp



Tom Montag

The Darkness

What is this
darkness? It is
emptiness at

the center of
seeds; it is
a chamber of

the stilled heart;
it is eyes down-
cast at confession.

It is wind
through the crotch
of a tree, the hawk

striking the mouse,
the last call of
the cranes before

they depart, the honk
of the lone goose.
It is a woman's fear,

a small boy's pain,
the silence of a poet
who doesn't know

what to say.
It is what ice
knows and the last

star burning out.
It is silence the
morning after.

Such Intensity

Such intensity,
the blue of sky
today, when

the rest of
the world is
ash grey and

cinder, when
I don't know how
to push on.

Follow the sun
someone would
say: it comes

up, crosses
the wide blue
day, sets

behind far
mountains. It
comes again

the morning
after. Such
intensity, this

joy that not
all that seems
lost is lost.

Tom Montag lives in Wisconsin and is the author of *In This Place: Selected Poems 1982-2013*. He has been a featured poet at *Atticus Review*, *Contemporary American Voices*, *Houseboat*, and *Basil O'Flaherty Review*. He has received Pushcart Prize nominations from *Provo Canyon Review*, *Blue Heron Review* and *The Lake*.

John B. Lee

Is Beijing Burning

we walk the smouldering streets
and cross
the smoky square
amazed to see
the ashy patina
that clings
to smudgy paint-shine
on the cars
the sun unseen within an amber sky
an artificial overcast
chokes all the light
our star's like fire hissing in an almost
combustible fog
the moment we burn
the edge of memory away
to find
the lie we'll tell
to children in their chairs
the future is a fuel to storms
today Chicago's blackened sky
today the waterwalls
that drown a dozen islands
in a leveling aftermath

high winds that break the heart
and snap the bones to candle-crush

and there above Tiananmen
outside the lion-guarded gate
the face of Mao Tse-tung
smiling down through blurs of smog

what's truth to him
or truth to us
or truth to anyone
dishonest ghosts
with much to say
tell stories from the grave

Counting Cranes

at high noon
standing on the Bund
looking east across Huangpu River
at Pudong skyline
cast in grey smoke
as though seen through
the ripening lens of an aging eye
I think of the language of morning
when I talked over breakfast
with an American steel man
living here in Shanghai
since twenty years ago
in 1995 he said
half of the construction cranes
on the planet
were working in one city
meaning this new city
near the mouth of the Yangtze
in the financial district
all that I'd seen
the night before
illuminated and lovely
in the backdrop of an oriental night

dark and cast-iron black
holding Li Po's moon
like a sentry lantern
lit till dawn amazed by sleep
lost every artifice of light
and I remember
looking west and east
and east again
into that tall brilliance
dwarfing even the ziggurat
of ancient story in the rising voices of a broken world

when suddenly
a drifting scow
blackened our view
and like a knife in silk
the mind tore darkness to a plimsol line
from stem to stern
the ugly prow cut water so we rolled
upon its roiling wake
the shining city drowned in shimmering foam

if I say I prefer
the architecture
on the Bund
old Europe and her earth-brown brick
the commerce of a different age
less glassy in the gloss of time
the spread-wing gargoyle in the eaves
in flight through opium smoke
at the end of an era of war on war

what might the twenty-four million say

I've been to the Yu Garden
to the squat pagodas
and the natural stone sculptures
of a slower hour

and if my inbreath burns
like a dragon from the west
my outbreath also smoulders
at the river's bend building this poem
one scorched word at a time

Poet Laureate of the city of Brantford and of Norfolk County, **John B. Lee**'s most recent book, *The Widow's Land*, is a prose memoir published by Black Moss Press. The author of over seventy five titles, his work has appeared internationally and he is the recipient of well over fifty prestigious writing awards. He lives in a lake house overlooking Long Point Bay, Ontario.

Havana Door Handle (Cuba) – Carrie Connel-Gripp



Dia de Muertos (Mexico) – Kenneth Salzmänn



Totem (Mexico) – Kenneth Salzmann



Pedestrian, San Miguel (Mexico) – Kenneth Salzmnn



Kara Ghobhainn Smith. *September Swimming*.
2016. Acrylic on canvas. Private collection.



Kara Ghobhainn Smith

September Swimming

– for artist Leonard Jubenville
and photographer Reagan Smolders

He chooses trees first
orange for green; white for blue.

Play

*where the earth is sky,
and ground an Elysian azure.*

She selects screens,
purposefully disturbing
his inert, careful control.

Play

*where birds walk the earth
and rhinos take flight.*

He threads a small string
through the scene, rewinding each
branch, rekindling the absurd.

Play

*where chimpanzees chatter
in schooners of Pi.*

She adds avocado filters,
aligns the scene through her
two-dimensions and
his cellular sight,

Play

*where dark is illuminated,
light pushes forth a
cast to worlds yet revealed.*

Kara Ghobhainn Smith is the author of *The Artists of Crow County* (Black Moss Press, 2017), co-author of *Next to the Ice* (Mosaic Press, 2016), *Teaching, Learning, Assessing* (Mosaic Press, 2007), and the author of the blogspot poetry series, *The Travelling Professor*. Ghobhainn is Chatham-Kent's 2015-2016 Writer-in-Residence, and Editor of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning* (JTL), as well as the books' editor for the *Canadian Journal of Education* (CTL). Her poems have been shortlisted for the 2016 Walrus Poetry Prize and the Polar Expressions Prize. She is presently Associate Professor of Language Education at the University of Windsor.

Peter Baltensperger

Because in Autumn

The carnival came to town every fall, just before the agricultural county fair and the county-wide horse show. Sequoia Anderson went to all of them every year, being the first one there and, more often than not, the last one to leave. She let herself melt into the fairgrounds and became part of it all, taking everything in, becoming her autumn soul.

It was a particularly beautiful fall day when the carnival arrived. She was sitting in her gondola at the top of the Ferris wheel, rocking lightly in the breeze, white cumulus clouds above her. Letting her mind float up into them, she conjured up celestial sailboats, mythical creatures in a sea of blue, a swan on a quiet lake. She reached up to the swan with her hands and lifted it out of the sky, cradling the cottony-soft cloud in her arms.

When the giant wheel returned her to the ground and she stepped out of her gondola, a young man was standing not far from her, looking at her intently, two globes of colored cotton candy in his hands.

“You have a cloud,” he said.

“Yes,” she said. “I was up on the Ferris wheel.”

“I know,” he said. “I saw you. I’ve been waiting for you.”
He held one of the cotton candies out to her.

Sequoia wasn’t quite sure what she was supposed to do, if she was supposed to know the man who had so suddenly and unexpectedly appeared.

“You don’t know me,” he said as if reading her thoughts. “I just saw you getting the cloud and I couldn’t help myself. I’m Tanner,” he introduced himself. “Tanner Silverwood. Now you do know me.”

“I’m Sequoia,” she said. She tucked her cloud under her arm and took the cotton candy from him. “Sequoia Anderson. So now you know me.”

“Sequoia? Really?” Tanner exclaimed. “I love that name. And I love the wood. I have a polished sphere of petrified sequoia wood at home.”

“I just have the name,” Sequoia said.

They were in a high-speed train carving up a red-tinged landscape, villages and towns, forests and fields speeding by, blurred people. Sequoia cradled her cloud on her lap, both nibbling at their cotton candy, watching the countryside change and evolve. The white clouds were still in the sky, the sun slowly rotating towards the horizon, shreds of a calliope in the autumn air.

When the full moon rose up into the sky, they went swimming in a calm lake, fracturing the moon as they pulled their bodies slowly through the sparkling water, moon slivers in their eyes. And afterwards, the golden sheen dripping off their cooled bodies, Sequoia's cloud waiting for them in the grass, they stretched out in the meadow side by side. They put their heads on the cloud, listened to the lake, to the voices of the moon.

Back at the carnival, the Ferris wheel stood like an explosion of light against the darkening sky, eclipsing the moon. Feeling drawn to the booths of skill lined up along the midway, they strolled along with the crowd looking for interesting games. Sequoia had always been good with the air guns and the tennis balls and the fishing rods and owned a whole collection of stuffed animals, trinkets,

bags of secrets, carved boxes of answers to unasked questions.

They tried their hand at several games, Tanner proving to be equally skilled, and won so many directives to their mental quests they could hardly carry them all. They laughed gleefully at their hoard, helping each other balance their innermost reflections, Sequoia holding tightly on to her cloud.

When the carnival closed late at night, they walked through the adjoining park, the full moon high in the sky by then, guiding them through their uncertainties, their minds glowing in its sheen. On the other side of the park, they boarded a streetcar and went to Tanner's studio apartment so he could show her his sphere. Sequoia put her treasure gently on the coffee table, then took the sphere into her hands to feel its meaning, its significance, and carefully placed it on top of the cloud.

Peter Baltensperger is a senior Canadian writer of Swiss origin and the author of ten books of various genres. His work has also appeared in several hundred print and on-line publications around the world over the past few decades. He makes his home in London, Ontario with his wife Viki and their four cats and two rather rambunctious puppies, all of them literally inclined.

Camille Intson

To The City That Writes My Eulogy

iii.

last month, i took a stand-up comic to brunch
in the middle of a blizzard
in a city i never sleep in.

we saw a play at the theatre two blocks away
it was about the death of America, or quirky
middle-aged couples having sex with each other's wives.

he didn't eat his pad thai
and mumbled something about suicide
the man in the show said a line that ended the play off
he said: "i don't think we're ever going to be happy"
or something —

i thought my Uber driver
must have been Jesus reincarnated
because nobody else has ever driven a Jeep
with no snow tires at 80km/hr in the middle of a blizzard
in downtown Toronto.

i stood outside of an abandoned funeral parlour
with neon pink lights and watched the snowflakes fall
between this universe and the next.

i didn't miss my Greyhound.

my housemates argue in the morning
about whose dishes are dirty in the sink
i wake up later than usual
and they ask me how the trip was

i don't mention the stand-up comic
or the line in the play that i forgot
or the neon lights or the snowflakes
or the suicide or the blizzard

that's between me
and the city i never sleep in.

ii.

i live in a building with red bricks
my room has red curtains and when i moved in
i dyed my hair red to match the blood in my heart
and on the bricks and on the curtains.

my favourite activities
are being quiet in the farmer's market
drinking hot chocolate alone and thinking about kissing.
the same man has made my drink at least ten times.

sometimes, when i walk on a path for too long
i stop in the middle of an empty field
and lie there for half an hour
and that'd be what heaven's like

i don't answer my family's texts, and
i tell the boy in my theatre history class that our souls
are tuned into the same frequency.

i.

my childhood home is still my legal mailing address.

i have a box of letters from my ex-lovers in my closet
my dad's had the same jokes for 20 years
my mom's had the same hair colour for 20 years
so did my parents' only child
until the red bricks and the red curtains

my room's also had the same clinical depression
for 20 years

in high school, i used to eat sushi with my friends
at a restaurant on James Street.

now, when i come back, they ask me to dinner
to that same restaurant on James Street.
they like dining with strangers, i've gathered

now, when i look in the mirror
in my divorced parents' old bathroom,
i say to myself:

*if i died tomorrow, who would be writing my eulogy
and who would tell the man at the farmer's market
who makes my hot chocolate
and who would know of the body print in the empty field
and the soul frequencies
and the play and the stand-up comic
and the brunch and the blizzard and the snowflakes
and the Uber driver Son of God Almighty
and the kissing and the universe?*

next thing i know there's an alien in the mirror

tell me who i am

it whispers,

indulge me.

Camille Intson is a Liberal arts student at Western University, presently majoring in English Literature and Theatre Studies. She is currently the Theatre Coordinator and Director for the Arts and Humanities Students' Council. Their production of Jean Anouilh's ANTIGONE will be performed at *The Arts Project* in London, Ontario from March 8-11, 2017.

Hannah Bleier

In Nevada

Near Vegas with its orphaned children,
its strippers with hearts of kryptonite,
wild ponies run through Red Rock Canyon.

Open the car windows, hear the wind
whipping through their manes, rapid hoofbeats.

Forget what brought you to this desert,
you joyless gambler, you heartsick rube.

Go see the Great Unconformity
a few miles from the Four Queens motel.
Rock striations there do not follow
the pattern of geologic time.
A billion years seem to be "missing."

Rummage through your pockets, check your bag.
Drink plenty of water, then go back to the motel.
Sleep. Dream of ponies running, and rocks.

You'll still be broke and lonely when you wake,
but something else will be different.

Hannah Bleier is a special education teacher in Brooklyn. Her work has been published in *Black Clock*, *California Poets*, *voicemail poems*, and various anthologies including *Mischief*, *Caprice*, and *Other Poetic Strategies*. She studied with Eloise Klein Healy and recently attended Marge Piercy's juried poetry intensive in Cape Cod.

April Bulmer

Slaves

He traded me
for spoons and socks
and a sack of sugar.
Because it was rain in the desert, he said.
“You sure is pretty, though,” he added.
“Your skin the shade
of brown eggs
and your hair long
and straight as twine.”

I am woman
made by the Creator.
My heart husked
like corn
and my girl-part too
sensitive as fruit.
One day, I will peel it back
for a good man
and make a babe.

I will carry her
in a soft suede bag
lined in fallen leaves.
Always loose
and gently laid.

Parlour Games

High tea, the sun in Pisces: crumpets, jam, sugar, cream. Oranges and cocoa in pink cups. The little one, Sadie, had red hair and her school shoes were small and scuffed. Charles wore his clerical collar and blessed the little repast. His narrow hand made the sign of the cross, though the skin of the fruit was still thick and tough. I wanted to kiss him, push him into the green cushions of the settee, but he spoke to old Grammy, hat and net, her eyes like blue fish. Bob played solitaire. The deck of cards was wrinkled and smelled of coffee and sweat. Derek smoked marijuana, a tightly-rolled cigarette: the sweet scent of magic rising from his sleeve. Brian's face was the shade of café au lait. He sketched African masks at an easel by the window bay. Sharon shaved her head. Dennis wore a black t-shirt, a crucified dog on his chest. Myles sang of a bird on a wire. Alex could not see. Eliza wrote poems in a small bound book. Tom bore a poodle on a lead. Tamara pined for her boyfriend, Sean. Laurel practiced a plié. Phyllis played a waltz. Dirk waxed his skis. My mother's teeth were crooked, though she prayed for me.

April Bulmer is a multiple award-winning poet living in Cambridge, Ontario and the author of 11 books of poetry, including her latest, *And With Thy Spirit* (Hidden Brook Press).

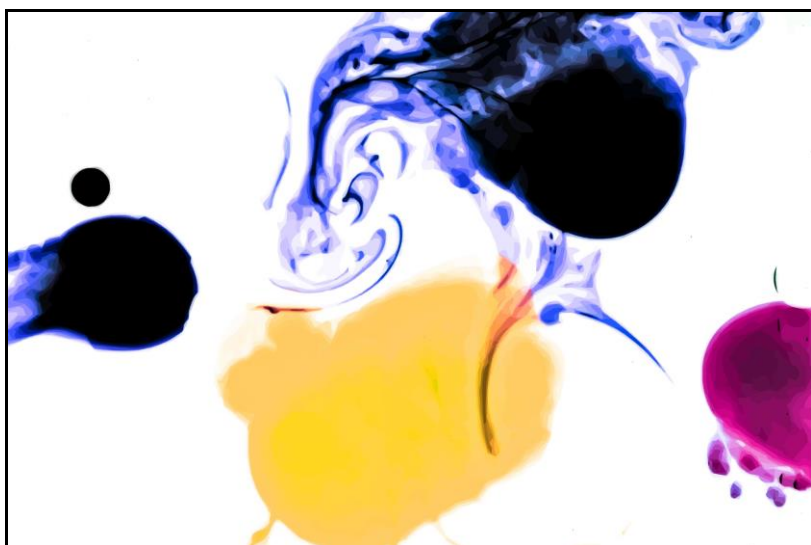
Earthly – Christine Brandel



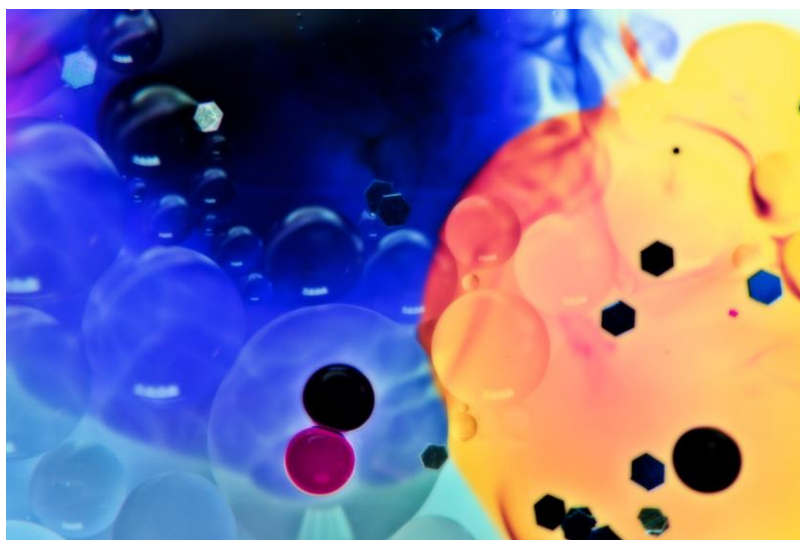
Eel – Christine Brandel



Kindergarten – Christine Brandel



Party – Christine Brandel



Dropped Into Pink Liquid – Christine Brandel



Christine Brandel is a writer and photographer. Her book, *A Wife is a Hope Chest*, will appear in 2017 as the first full-length collection in the Mineral Point Poetry Series from Brain Mill Press. Her art has recently appeared in *The New Post-literate*, *The Wild Word*, and *Sea Foam Mag*. More of her work can be found at clbwrites.com

Meera Nehme

Stomp on my Eyes

Staring up at the ceiling, usually white, but midnight and tired eyes have turned it blue. To my side, a stuffed bunny; I swear it used to be pink. I look down to my toes, but my chest, rising and falling as fast as my thoughts, blurs the view. Now I know that the cracking sound comes from the ventilation and the fridge's system automatically turns on every forty-six minutes. My dad still snores and my mom shuts her bed light at 2:45 am. The fridge is rumbling.

Past nights have revealed a broken brain in a beat-up body, run down by words read on pages and heard in classrooms, streets, and bathrooms. My hair fans across my pillow. It looks red in the dark. I sob. She said it might be because of what happened two years ago. Or again, I might just be thinking of the faces I saw in my dreams, faces I punched and slapped. Their eyes remained focused on empty grey rooms, and their bodies, unmoving and unbruised.

The bird just had a nightmare. I heard his wings flutter when he fell to the bottom of the cage. Now he tweets. She told me to concentrate on soft familiar noises when I can't sleep.

They forced me to go. They yank my hair when I finally sink into my mattress, just to watch me cry myself to sleep, early in the morning.

Outside my window, passing cars sound like spaceships. But I know spaceships don't exist. I'm not crazy.

The fridge is silent. Normally, that is when I start to hear the voices in the walls. But not tonight. The house is terribly quiet. Everyone must be sleeping. Except for me.

I'm not crazy. Mom always speaks on the phone in her room, door closed. I try to catch her words, but they are whispers lost in her pleading voice. She loves me though. She reminds me every night before she disappears into her room. Sometimes I catch a glance of her face as she rushes to the bathroom. Her cheeks, her eyes, her lips, all puffy and red. She looks like me.

"Draw whatever's on your mind," said Mrs. Jenas.

I always thought of my hand as particularly oversized. I looked funny holding the green wax pencil as Marine's hand slid past mine in an opposite, exaggerated movement. Did her parents end up getting divorced? She wasn't a weird kid. Mrs. Jenas praised my creativity: I had all the colors, mixed in different shapes and lines. I keep it, right at the bottom of the top drawer, under my diary.

At eighteen, I feel more connected to it than ever.

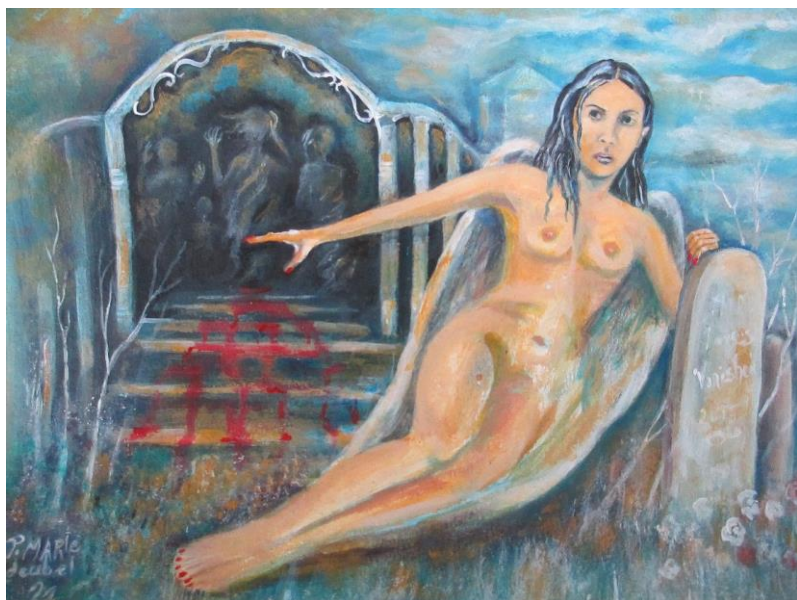
Footsteps. Pounding in my head. Dad does not usually get up at around that time. I still hear him snoring. They stomp on my eyes and walk round and round in my ears. Don't scream! You'll wake them up. She always reminded me of breathing. It stops them from coming. My bed finds itself on a wave. I shut my eyes. Three knocks on my forehead. Someone pulls me by the hand, trying to steal my fingers. And tomorrow night, my toes.

Meera Nehme is a student at John Abbott College in Montreal. She has published poetry in her college's literary journal. Having just completed a course in Creative Writing, she is now submitting her work to journals.

Paula Marie Deubel. *The Vanishing Point*. 2014.
Acrylic, 9" x 12"



Paula Marie Deubel. *The Gate Keeper*. 2015.
Acrylic, 9" x 12"



Paula Marie Deubel. *Some Quiet Little Company*. 2014.
Acrylic. Version 2.



Paula Marie Deubel is a Detroit artist who studied art through private art schools and various professional artists since the age of nine. She lived ten years in Europe where she first began to work as an artist. Her work has been published in several magazines and books, including *Madhatters' Literary Review*, *Poems of Love & Madness* (52 illustrations), and featured in the award winning *Thought Collection Journal*, as well as exhibited in galleries and art shows. Favored mediums are oil paints, acrylics, watercolor, charcoal, and graphite.

Kristina Elyse Butke

Coppelius

Each piece has its place and purpose,
Yet I tell you, the heart isn't needed.
Everyone believes the heart holds the soul, but it's
Simple. Too simple a thought.

A heart isn't made, but projected;
Rendered on receipt.
Even without a heart, she will live; a perfect being.

Not that humanity was my goal. It never was. It is
Olympus. I named her for it; a reminder that
The gods would not be gods if they ever had a heart.

And what is a god, but an all-seeing eye?

Whatever he may tell you, whatever he may spin,
I was the one who brought her to life —
Not through empty mechanisms or clockworks.
Driven by my namesake, I concerned myself with the
Ocular, and through some strange alchemy I
Wrought the thing that enabled the soul.

Bright, beaming eyes against her cool, waxy visage —
Undoubtedly my best creation, and the key to her beauty.
The soul-giver? No. Something else entirely:

A spyglass; another all-seeing eye.

Maker of the invisible visible;
Destroyer of distances between;
Imbuing the lifeless with life. The
Real mechanism begins with the beholder, who
Rests his gaze upon that which he desires.
Only then does she live. Her eyes are his own; her soul,
But his reflection.

Kristina Elyse Butke writes speculative fiction, primarily fantasy and horror. She is also a presenter at various conventions where she teaches creative writing and drama. She has an MFA in Writing Popular Fiction from Seton Hill University and currently lives in Japan as an assistant language teacher of English. For more of her work, please visit her website, www.kristinaelysebutke.com

Kelly Nickie

Burnt

The iron's at 400 degrees
best friend tells me
to hold my head still
against the ironing board
while she flattens
my mother's curls
taming my genetics
one strand at a time
a tumbleweed
rinsed underwater
with Head and Shoulders residue

Grad photos are in an hour
I still need to do hers
split ends static and sizzle

Last documented photo of my high school life
with straight hair and straight teeth
everyone will remember
pretty & nice

My mother laughs
yells down the hall
smells burnt hair
she doesn't know

Kelly Nickie is an avid reader, writer, and coffee drinker from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. She enjoys finding mundane objects and phrases of the everyday, and turning them into second thoughts.

Penn Kemp

Alice(s) on Wonderland

En route to the tea party, she
and I circle round Wonderland Rd.,
missing our exit three times due
to snow mounds. Since she loves

Alice in Wonderland, I'm telling
her all about Gregory Maguire's
fanciful take, *After Alice*. Then
we continue with old tales untold

of love, death, grief, and who said
what when. Till we cease gossiping,
our way's blocked, address obscured.
Are we caught in the glee of negative
revelation or waiting suspended until
the whole story's sprung out in the open
and the right turn is suddenly cleared?

As inaugural Poet Laureate for the City of London, Ontario (2010-12), **Penn Kemp** presented poetry at many civic functions. Her latest work is a new collection of poetry, *Barbaric Cultural Practice*. Forthcoming is *The Triumph of Teresa Harris*, a play to be produced at the Palace Theatre in London, March 2017.

Matthew Nini

Nearsightedness

Cavafy, Joyce and Huxley
all at table
each hidden behind glasses filled with teary drink,
stinging Chablis,
cloudy brine of oysters
shared between them;
they sit in myopic harmony,
slurred into the same legato blur.
Intense stares of unseeing cross
as each considers how the others' light is spent.
It is the silhouette of things
that cries out for our words:
Too-solid forms have musical contours
and speak for themselves.

Bend with the Remover to Remove

Love is not
a contemporary feeling.
The old hands have robbed us of every idiom:
Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, the lot,
their gilded monuments are paperweights
we must circumnavigate —
corner scribbles
muddled aphorism
numbed by metaphor my
synecdoche tongue
blubbers borrowed words,
maybe Larkin on his seventh pint.

And so when I see you
reading the papers in the café
laughing unpoetically at the movies
jogging past, pony-tail adrift,
my eyes are aflutter with characters,
rhymes welling up in the corners
clouding the view.
Did Marlowe ever buy a girl a drink
and tell her that her face had launched a thousand ships?

What can I say?

No words — mine or another's
but I will say them all the same
if you will at least pretend to listen;
that's what people do
when they want to be in love.

Still Life

Familiar bowl of fruit
(why change the leitmotif now?)
double orange aureoled
ripe as breasts
beneath fuzzy figs,
interspersed with potent apricot
exotic smells — if only eyes could smell!
flies monotonously abuzz with
the romance of springtime rot
enter lute or plaster statue,
any distraction will do, really,
to make our bowl different from
all the others ...
Pay them no mind:
watch the flies creep onto the oranges,
minute tangerine-tickled areolas
steeped in figgy delight —
such potential.

Matthew Nini has an MA in Philosophy of Religion from McGill University. He lives in Montréal.

Lara Klein

Forest Poem

Smoke tangles with the needles and branches.

If it is true that the higher the trunk,
the closer to God, then the highest
conifer must tickle his feet. I am
a creature of the underbrush, and you a
Quercus virginiana, which is why
trunk after trunk runs by too fast to catch
my outstretched hand. I am left to touch the
tattered carpet of the tiny compartment
and watch as the orange sun falls into the
verdure and explodes. I wonder what is
broken within me while, oblivious
to the forest steaming by, you are reading
of ancient cedars in a holy land.

Lara Klein is a young writer and translator. Her poetry has been published in *Forage* magazine. She currently lives in St. Louis.

Dorothy Nielsen

Downstream

The words I scratched on birch boles
in April have morphed,
peeled, been shed.
I can make out only one of them:
“light.”

The red-tailed hawk
I stood by as he ate his catch
in May
might or might not be
the same one who glides across my path this evening
at a bend in the sumac trail.

A few rogue cells have changed everything —
skin: thinner, walks: slower,
words: running out.

The deer who watched me
steal up as she
nibbled grass and leaves in June

then bounded along the river
on a path too narrow for me to follow
could be one of those
eating from a flowering bush
planted against a cemetery stone
here late this fall evening
a mile
downstream.

Dorothy Nielsen has published poetry and literary criticism in many Canadian and U.S. literary and academic journals. She is the author of *The Persephone Papers* (Harmonia Press, 2013). She is a creative writing workshop facilitator at King's University College in London, Ontario.

Alan Leangvan

My Story

I want to tell you something amazing
a universe on paper
sold to your eyes for the low, low price
of “how long can you keep reading?”
I want to tell you my pencil races across paper
like a blind madman
who knows exactly where he wants to go ...
even if he takes a while getting there
I want to tell you my fingertips dance on keyboards
and my hands hold onto ideas as easily
as a neatly stacked pile of final drafts
I want to tell you this heart never breaks rhythm
when it sings on paper
I want to
I *really, really* want to
but that isn't my story

My story is a planet still forming
a rock still learning how to
spin the endless expanse of language
sold to your eyes for the low, low price
of whatever the cover charge was

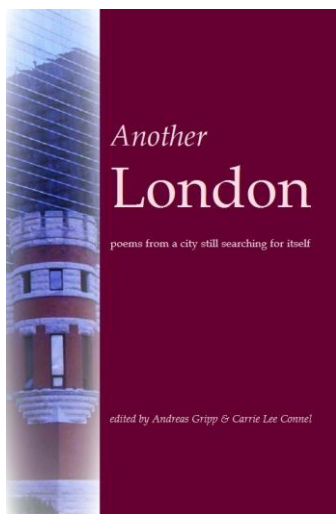
My story is a pencil timidly feeling its way
across 8½ by 11 inch deserts that don't like to end
my fingertips fault and fumble
trying to cha-cha and shimmy words from a keyboard
and my hands grasp at ideas falling everywhere
like hills of unedited rough drafts
my heart shivers and forgets rhythm
when it negotiates with paper

so I'm sorry
I want to tell you something amazing
I *really, really* want to
but that isn't my story

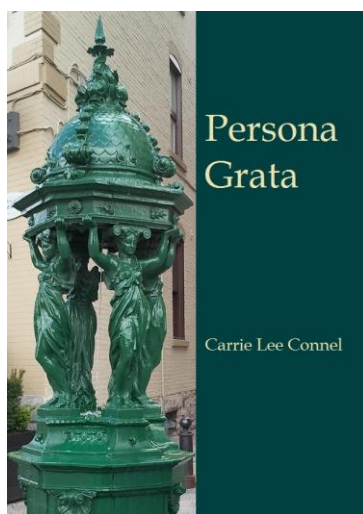
Born and raised in London, Ontario, **Alan Leangvan** started writing because of a talent show in 7th grade. Being a smaller kid with a physical disability, sports and other physical activities were impractical and dangerous so he turned to words. A lovely substitute teacher at the time suggested writing. Until then he had never written a poem before. The result was that he won the talent show, getting his work published at 13 years young, and setting him on the path that lead to today. He's recently represented London at poetry slams in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Guelph and had poetry appear in *Another London : poems from a city still searching for itself* (Harmonia Press, 2016).



P O E T R Y from Harmonia Press



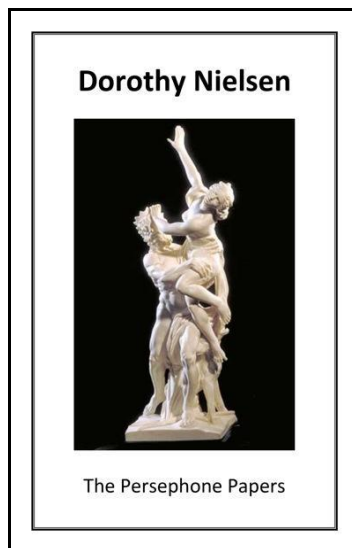
Another London – various authors



Persona Grata by Carrie Lee Connel

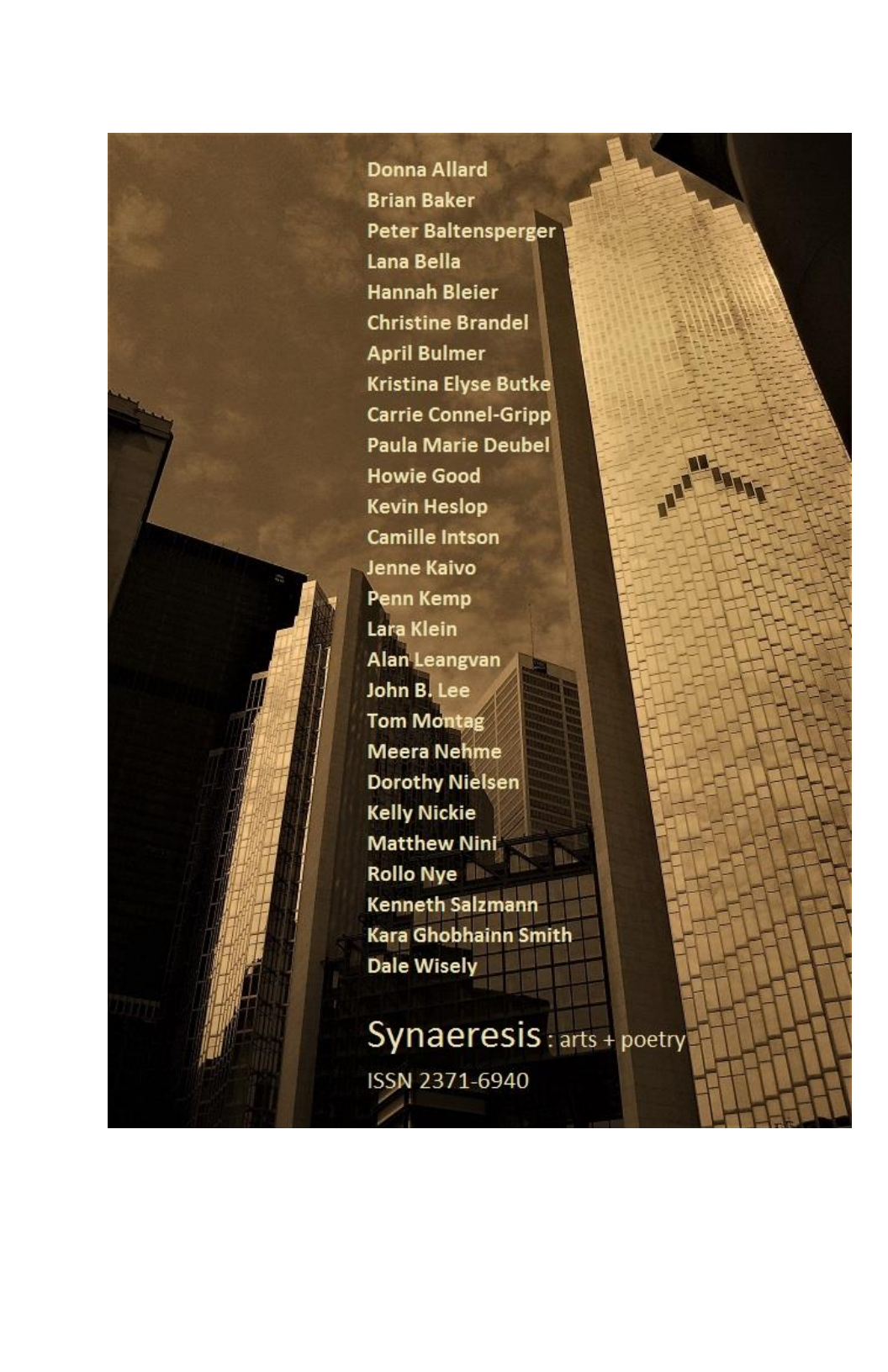


Snowflake Sleep by Farrukh Chishtie



Persephone Papers - Dorothy Nielsen

Available at harmoniapress.blogspot.com



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ISSN 2371-6940